is no disclosure of other sterilant concentration levels, nor is mention of a different sterilant concentration level anywhere else within the apparatus. The Examiner contends that "range" of the present invention (i.e., from 33% to 0) reads on Kelbrick et al. (see Item 6.). The instant claims, as amended, refer to ratios of concentration levels in concentration zones, not to ranges. The present invention has, *inter alia*, four distinct concentration zones that have *at the same time*, concentration levels in each zone of 3 ppm, .1-.5 ppm, .1 ppm, and 1,000 ppm, respectively. There is nothing disclosed in Kelbrick et al. that shows a difference in sterilant concentration level from one zone to another. Thus, the rejection should be withdrawn.

Further, Kelbrick et al. does not disclose, or suggest, *maintaining* sterilant concentration levels of any sort in a sterilant concentration zone. Kelbrick et al. teaches using a sterilant to disinfect a filling cabinet. The Examiner admits (see Item 7) that the different concentration levels of sterilant are created in Kelbrick et al. via the difference in sterilant at the nozzle vs. the amount of sterilant at the objected to be sterilized. This arrangement in Kelbrick et al. could not possibly provide for an apparatus, such as the present invention, whereby sterilant concentration zones are *maintained* in sterilant concentration levels ratios of at least 5 to 1. The Examiner further states in item 6 whereby the concentration level of sterilant is *initially* at 33% and then "*eventually*" is diluted to 0. Thus, the concentration levels of Kelbrick et al. are entirely evanescent and constantly changing *over time*. This is a clear indication that Kelbrick et al. is a teaching away from the present invention's ability to *maintain* sterilant concentration levels at specific ratios. The present invention is a completely different invention. Accordingly, Applicant submits that independent claims 1, 3, 17, 33, and 38 are allowable and the aforementioned rejections should be withdrawn.

Claims 16 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kelbrick et al. in view of Petho et al. Claims 23-26, 28, 30-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kelbrick et al. Claims 3, 5-16 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kelbrick et al. in view of Petho et al. as applied to claims 1-2 and 33 above, and further in view of Hoshino. Neither Petho et al. nor Hoshino either alone, or in combination, rectify the glaring deficiency of Kelbrick et al. as stated above. Thus, these 103(a) rejections should also be withdrawn.

As presented in the arguments above, Applicant asserts that independent claim 1 is allowable. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2 and 39 which are dependent on 1 is allowable. Applicant asserts that independent claim 3 is allowable. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 5-16 that are dependent on claim 3 are allowable. Applicant asserts that independent claim 33 is allowable. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 35-37 that are dependent on claim 33 are allowable. Applicant asserts that independent claim 38 is allowable.

CONCLUSION

In summary, based on the preceding arguments, Applicant respectfully believes that all independent claims and dependent claims meet the acceptance criteria for allowance and therefore request favorable action. If the Examiner believes that anything further would be helpful to place the application in better condition for allowance, Applicant invites the Examiner to contact Applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

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